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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2026
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: UN ENVOY SEES HARDENING OF HIZBALLAH POSITION
LINKED TO TRIBUNAL, 1701

Classified By: Jeffrey Feltman, Ambassador, per 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Geir Pedersen, the UN Secretary General's Personal Representative for Lebanon, told the Ambassador in a 11/17 meeting that he had seen his "usual contact" (whom he once revealed as Wafiq Safa') from Hizballah that morning. Pedersen said that the meeting contained mostly bad news, but with one bit of good news: While convinced that Hizballah's tactics remained the same and were coordinated down to the smallest detail with Michel Aoun's son-in-law and advisor Gebran Bassil, Pedersen said he no longer believed that street demonstrations and civil disobedience would break out on Monday or Tuesday (11/20 or 11/21). "It seems we have some time, maybe even more than a week" Pedersen said, adding that his contact projected confidence that his side would win in the current political stand-off with the March 14 majority.

¶2. (S/NF) But, across the board, Hizballah's substantive positions have hardened, Pedersen reported. Regarding the cabinet, specific proposals should be shared with Parliament Speaker Berri, not Hizballah, but the one-third-plus-one blocking minority is no longer sufficient. Hizballah wants Siniora removed. On the presidency, Hizballah will back whomever Michel Aoun wants, so there's no reason to discuss the presidency with Hizballah. On its arms, UNSCR 1559, and UNSCR 1701, Hizballah rejects any discussion. When pressed by Pedersen about when such issues can be discussed, the contact answered perhaps after the liberation of Sheba' Farms. On the special tribunal, the contact said that Hizballah shares the same concerns as Emile Lahoud (who gave a 32-page criticism of the tribunal documents to Minister of Justice Charles Rizk) and was expecting the UN and the GOL to take Lahoud's concerns into account. Most alarming, Pedersen said, was his contact's assertion that, every week, Hizballah and Aoun will offer Lebanon "a new surprise" until Siniora's cabinet is swept away. Pressed by Pedersen to define the type of surprises, the contact said that they would be "peaceful," "constitutional," and "democratic."

¶3. (S/NF) Pedersen said that he also asked his contact about disturbing reports that wanted terrorist mastermind Imad Mughniyah was now acting as Hassan Nasrallah's deputy. Pedersen said that he felt he had struck a nerve, for, unusually, his contact refused to make any comment.

¶4. (S/NF) Pedersen said that he could not tell whether Hizballah's positions had truly hardened or whether his contact was bluffing and sending a message, knowing how often Pedersen compares notes with March 14 political leaders and diplomatic colleagues. But Pedersen said that he was

starting to conclude that the impact of UNSCR 1701 implementation had unpleasantly surprised Hizballah and that the speed of the processing of the special tribunal documents had unpleasantly surprised Damascus. Pedersen wondered how far Hizballah would go in stymieing 1701 and blocking the tribunal. From his meeting that day, he answered his own question by stating "pretty far, it seems."

FELTMAN